



December 2025

Hello Hub Friends and Supporters,

We hope this finds you well as the holidays approach and the year draws to a close.

It has been a busy end of year for the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) Bycatch Solutions Hub (the Hub), as our staff has taken part in many exciting projects and conferences that we look forward to sharing with you.



This fall, we welcomed new intern Sheridan Hall to our Protecting Ocean Wildlife Team. Sheridan is a graduating senior at Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island, US, completing a Bachelor of Arts in environmental science with a minor in biology and sustainability studies.

Best wishes for a joyful holiday and a Happy New Year! We thank you for your continuous support of SFP and the Bycatch Solutions Hub.

Anne DiMonti
Protecting Ocean Wildlife Program Manager

Hub Happenings

To continue to bridge the gap for implementing sustainable solutions to eliminate bycatch of endangered, threatened, and protected (ETP) species, SFP took part in a number of exciting incentives this fall.

To address the critical issue of entanglement of North Atlantic right whales in pot and trap fisheries, SFP partnered with the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium to host an Innovative Gear Workshop and Tour on September 11-12, in Boston, MA, US.



Workshop participants aboard lobster vessel viewing use of on-demand fishing.

This first-of-its-kind workshop brought together representatives of the seafood industry, harvesters, gear innovators, and scientists to review innovative pot and trap technologies, discuss challenges with supporting responsibly harvested lobster and crab efforts, and understand the significance of ETP species bycatch within the pot and trap industry. For more information, check out our [Innovative Gear Workshop Blog](#).

On October 20, in partnership with New England Aquarium, we presented the results of this workshop at the 2025 [Ropeless Consortium](#) Annual Meeting in New Bedford, MA. This event was followed by the 2025 [North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium](#) Annual Meeting on October 22-23. SFP is a proud partner of the North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium.

Members of the SFP Protecting Ocean Wildlife Team also presented at the 2025 NGO Tuna Forum in Monetary Bay, CA, US, October 7-8, and at the [MSC Stakeholder Advisory Council Meeting](#) in London, England, November 12-15. We are looking forward to continuing these collaborative efforts and similar projects in 2026.



Looking Ahead...

In our last newsletter, we revealed that a facelift of the Hub website would take place in fall 2025. The project has been rescheduled to the beginning of 2026 to provide more time for the improvements needed. The resources you have come to depend on will not change, but we hope the updates will allow users to more easily navigate the website.



Project Support

To date, the Bycatch Solutions Hub has supported over \$1 million (USD) in bycatch mitigation efforts! As a reminder, the Hub [Funding Opportunities](#) page matches bycatch solutions projects in need of support with interested seafood industry partners. There are still exciting bycatch solutions projects listed on the page in need of assistance. These projects include, but are not limited to:

Preventing Ghost Fishing in a Fragile Alaskan Ecosystem: In Alaskan waters, the loss of crab pots can affect the marine ecosystem and the communities who rely on these fisheries. Studies show 31,000 pots per year are lost in the Bering Sea. These pots last up to 15 years in the environment.



Blue Ocean Gear Smart Buoy

A way to resolve this issue is to use Smart Buoys to mark pot gear on the owner's chart plotter, as well as on any trawl vessel within a certain range of that gear. This project will fund 120 Smart Buoys for crab harvesters in the snow crab and baridai crab fisheries in the Bering Sea to mark their pots.



Ghost gear lobster trap

This effort will not only reduce the cost to harvesters who lose many pots each season to gear conflict, but also help protect the high levels of biodiversity in the ocean ecosystem from the preventable impacts of ghost fishing. In addition, it allows for seamless cooperation between fisheries, enabling them to operate in the same regions in synchronous manner.

Iluminar el Mar: This project uses small, affordable green LED lights attached to fishing nets to reduce the accidental capture of threatened and endangered species such as sea turtles, sharks, rays, dolphins, and whales. The lights work by making nets more visible to these species, which have different sensory abilities compared to target bony fish, allowing fishers to maintain their catch without harming vulnerable marine life. Trials from Phase I in coastal Ecuador showed impressive

results, reducing bycatch by 58% for sea turtles, 45% for sharks, 50% for rays, and 73% for dolphins and whales. In Phase II, the project will publish Phase I results, fine-tune the light configurations with fisher feedback, develop a national implementation plan, and roll out the technology on 100 artisanal gillnet vessels across three ports.

Implementation of Automatic Squid Jigging Systems in the US Atlantic

Region: The small-mesh squid fishery has long been criticized for its environmental impact. This project aims to maximize the quantity of squid caught using low-impact, mechanical squid jigging machines, while addressing bycatch and environmental concerns.

If you are interested in knowing more about any of these projects, please do not hesitate to contact me or visit our [Funding Opportunity Page](#).

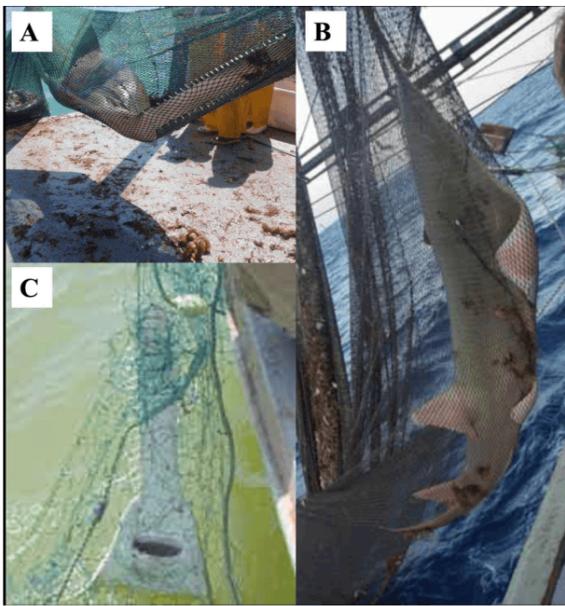


Project Spotlight: Electronic Monitoring of Endangered Smalltooth Sawfish Bycatch in the Florida Pink Shrimp Fishery

Smalltooth sawfish are large fish within the shark family. They are slow-growing and long-lived, and do not reproduce rapidly. While they once ranged throughout the tropical and subtropical waters of the Atlantic Ocean, their range has declined dramatically due to fishing, habitat loss, overexploitation, and, most recently, toxic algae blooms. They were listed under the Endangered Species Act in 2003, and a federal recovery plan was published in 2009.



Electronic monitoring cameras mounted on shrimp vessel.



Images of smooth sawfish entangled in fishing nets,

While there has never been a large-scale directed fishery, smalltooth sawfish become easily entangled in fishing gear (gill nets, otter trawls, trammel nets, and seines), often resulting in serious injury or death. The long, toothed rostrum of the smalltooth sawfish easily entangles in the webbing of various nets, including otter trawls.

While bycatch in shrimp trawls is a relatively rare occurrence, recently published research indicates that the US Florida pink shrimp fishery may be a greater threat to the endangered smalltooth sawfish than previously understood. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) latest sawfish bycatch estimates for the Gulf shrimp fleet range from 6 to 258 per year. At lower levels of bycatch, the population is expected to grow, whereas higher levels are likely to push the species closer to extinction. This uncertainty is due to a lack of data on sawfish interactions with the shrimp fishery.

To address this lack of data, SFP is partnering with LGL Ecological Research Associates and Saltwater Inc., with support from Publix, Cox's Wholesale Seafood, and Wood's Fisheries, to develop and test innovative electronic monitoring (EM) systems that will improve monitoring of smalltooth sawfish bycatch in the Florida pink shrimp fishery. Funding for the project is being provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and Publix.

[Learn More about the Project](#)



Spotlight Organization:
International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)

ISSF is a global coalition of seafood companies, fisheries experts, scientific and environmental organizations, and the vessel community. SFP is proud to collaborate with ISSF on several initiatives, including participating in their Environmental Stakeholder Committee.

ISSF promotes science-based initiatives for long-term tuna conservation, FAD management, bycatch mitigation, marine ecosystem health, capacity management, and illegal fishing prevention. Helping global tuna fisheries meet and maintain sustainability criteria to achieve the Marine Stewardship Council certification standard is ISSF's ultimate objective. Together, SFP and ISSF have worked to improve [transparency in tuna fisheries](#) and to advance the development of [Biodegradable FADs](#).



Bycatch in the News

- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) launched its **Shark Bycatch Mitigation Support Tool (DST)**. They are looking for stakeholders to assist in implementation of the tool in fisheries with high bycatch of sharks.
- Seafood and Fisheries Emerging Technologies (SAFET) is pleased announce its new **SEA-TECH-IN-MOTION** platform, which showcases practical examples of technology solutions supporting sustainable fisheries and seafood. Contributions to the platform are welcome, to demonstrate the implementation of technology in real fisheries or seafood settings.
- The new **Ocean Allies** incentive program is designed to increase data reporting and safe release of ETP species in the Eastern Pacific Ocean mahi-mahi longline fishery. With the financial support of [SFP's Global Mahi Supply Chain Roundtable](#) and Publix, the Ocean Allies program will recognize and reward the commitment of fishermen from Peru, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Panama, and Guatemala who demonstrate their commitment to addressing bycatch issues through data collection and best fishing practices.



Don't forget to visit the [Hub's Bycatch News page](#) for regular bycatch news updates and information.



Upcoming Meetings and Events

Save The Date!

[Seafood Expo North America](#)

March 15-17, 2026, in Boston, MA, US.



Join SFP for a variety of interactive panel discussions on topics such as emerging sustainable gear technologies and tuna innovations.

Stay tuned for more information!

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